JEPHTHA.

AN

ORATORIO.

OR,

SACRED DRAMA.

As it is Perform'd at the

THEATRE-ROYAL

IN

COVENT-GARDEN.

Set to Muſick by Mr. HANDEL.

LONDON:

Printed by and for J. WATTS; and Sold by him at the Printing-Office in *Wild-Court* near *Lincoln's-Inn-Fields*:

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

JEPHTHA.

ZEBUL, his Brother.

STORGE, his Wife.

IPHIS, his Daughter.

HAMOR, in love with *Iphis.*

Chorus of *Israelites.*

MVSEVM BRITAN NICVM

JEPHTHA.

A

SACRED DRAMA.

PART I. SCENE I.

ZEBUL, *with his Brethren*, &c.

RECITATIVE.

IT muſt be ſo; or theſe vile *Ammonites*,
Our lordly Tyrants now theſe eighteen Years,
Will cruſh the Race of *Iſraël*.---
Since Heav'n vouchſafes not, with immediate Choice,
To point us out a Leader, as before,
Ourſelves muſt chooſe.--- And who ſo fit a Man
As *Gilead*'s Son, our Brother, valiant *Jephtha*?---
True, we have ſlighted, ſcorn'd, expell'd him hence,
As of a Stranger born; but well I know him;
His generous Soul diſdains a mean Revenge,
When his diſtreſsful Country calls his Aid.---
And, perhaps, God may favour our Requeſt,
If with repentant Hearts we ſue for Mercy.

AIR.

No more pour forth unheeded Pray'rs
To Idols deaf, and vain:
No more with vile unhallow'd Airs,
The ſacred Rites profane.

CHORUS.

No more to Ammon's *God and King,*
Fierce Moloch, *ſhall our Cymbals ring,*
In diſmal Dance about the Furnace blue.
Chemoſh *no more*
Will we adore,
With timbrell'd Anthems, to Jehovah *due.*

SCENE II.

Enter Jephtha, Storgè, *&c.*

RECITATIVE.

Zebul. But *Jephtha* comes.--- Kind Heav'n aſſiſt our Plea.--
O *Jephtha*, with an Eye of Pity, look
On thy repentant Brethren in Diſtreſs.
Forgetful of thy Wrongs, redreſs thy Sire,
Thy Friends, thy Country, in extreme Deſpair.
Jephtha. I will: — ſo pleaſe it Heav'n; and theſe the Terms:
If I command in War, the like Command,
Should Heav'n vouchſafe us a victorious Peace,
Shall ſtill be mine. ---
Zebul. Agreed. --- Be witneſs, Heaven.

AIR.

Jephtha. *Virtue my Soul ſhall ſtill embrace;*
Goodneſs ſhall make me great.
Who builds upon this ſteady Baſe,
Dreads no Event of Fate.

RECITATIVE.

Storgè. 'Twill be a painful Separation, *Jephtha,*
To ſee Thee harneſs'd for the bloody Field.
But ah! how trivial are a Wife's Concerns,
When a whole Nation bleeds, and groveling lies,
Panting for Liberty and Life.

AIR.

In gentle Murmurs will I mourn,
As mourns the Mate-forſaken Dove;
And ſighing wiſh thy dear Return
To Liberty, and laſting Love. [Exeunt.

SCENE III.

Enter Hamor *and* Iphis.

RECITATIVE.

Hamor. Happy this Embaſſy, my charming *Iphis,*
Which once more gives thee to my longing Eyes.
As *Cynthia* breaking from long-darkning Clouds
On the benighted Traveller; the Sight
Of Thee, my Love, drives Darkneſs and Deſpair.
Again I live; in thy ſweet Smiles I live;
As in thy Father's ever-watchful Care

Our wretched Nation feels new Life, new Joy.
O haſte; and make my Happineſs complete.

AIR.

Dull Delay, in piercing Anguiſh,
Bids thy faithful Lover languiſh;
While he pants for Bliſs in vain.
Oh! with gentle Smiles relieve me;
Let no more falſe Hope deceive me;
Nor vain Fears inflict a Pain.

RECITATIVE.

Iphis. Ill ſuits the Voice of Love when Glory calls,
And bids thee follow *Jephtha* to the Field.
Act there the Hero, and let rival Deeds
Proclaim Thee worthy to be call'd his Son:
And *Hamor* ſhall not want his due Reward.

AIR.

Take the Heart you fondly gave;
Lodg'd in your Breaſt with mine;
Thus with double Ardour brave;
Sure Conqueſt ſhall be thine.

RECITATIVE.

Hamor. I go; --- My Soul inſpir'd by thy Command,
Thirſts for the Battel. --- I'm already crown'd
With the victorious Wreath; and Thou, fair Prize,
More worth than Fame or Conqueſt, thou art mine.

DUET.

These Labours past, how happy we!
How glorious will they prove!
When gath'ring Fruit from Conquest's Tree
We deck the Feast of Love! [Exeun

SCENE IV.

Jephtha *alone.*

RECITATIVE.

What mean these doubtful Fancies of the Brain?
Visions of Joy rise in my raptur'd Soul,
There play awhile, and set in darksome Night.
Strange Ardour fires my Breast; my Arms seem strung
With tenfold Vigour, and my crested Helm
To reach the Skies.--- Be humble still, my Soul. ---
It is the Spirit of God; in whose great Name
I offer up my Vow.---

RECITATIVE *accompany'd.*

If, Lord, sustain'd by thy almighty Pow'r,
Ammon I drive, and his insulting Bands,
From these our long-uncultivated Lands,
And safe return a glorious Conqueror; ---
What, or who-e'er shall first salute mine Eyes,
Shall be for ever thine, or fall a Sacrifice. ---

RECITATIVE.

'Tis said. ---

Enter Iſraelites, *&c.*

--- Attend ye Chiefs, and with one Voice,
ıvoke the holy Name of *Iſraël*'s God.

CHORUS.

O God, behold our ſore Diſtreſs;
Omnipotent, to plague, or bleſs!
But turn thy Wrath, and bleſs once more
Thy Servants, who thy Name adore. [Exeunt.

SCENE V.

Storgè, *alone.*

RECITATIVE.

" Some dire Event hangs o'er our Heads,
ome woful Song we have to ſing
n Miſery extreme. --- O, never, never
Vas my foreboding Mind diſtreſs'd before
Vith ſuch inceſſant Pangs. ---

AIR.

Scenes of Horror, Scenes of Woe,
Riſing from the Shades below,
Add new Terror to the Night.
While in never-ceaſing Pain,
That attends the ſervile Chain,
Joyleſs flow the Hours of Light.

SCENE VI.

Enter Iphis.

RECITATIVE.

Iphis. " Say, my dear Mother, whence theſe piercing Cries
That force me, like a frighted Bird, to fly
My Place of Reſt?---
Storgè. --- " For Thee I fear, my Child;
Such ghaſtly Dreams laſt Night ſurpris'd my Soul.
Iphis. Heed not theſe black Illuſions of the Night,
The mocking of unquiet Slumbers, heed them not.
My Father, touch'd with a diviner Fire,
Already ſeems to triumph in Succeſs,
Nor doubt I but *Jehovah* hears our Pray'rs.

AIR.

The ſmiling Dawn of happy Days
Preſents a Proſpect clear;
And pleaſing Hope's all-bright'ning Rays
Diſpel each gloomy Fear;
While every Charm that Peace diſplays,
Makes Spring-time all the Year. [Exeunt.

SCENE VII.

Enter Zebul, Jephtha, *&c.*

RECITATIVE.

Zebul. Such, *Jephtha*, was the haughty King's Reply. --
No Terms, --- but Ruin, Slavery, and Death.

Jephtha. Sound then the laſt Alarm; --- and to the Field,
'e Sons of *Iſrael* with intrepid Hearts;
)ependent on the Might of *Iſrael*'s God.

CHORUS.

" *When his loud Voice in Thunder ſpoke,*
With conſcious Fear the Billows broke,
Obſervant of his dread Command.
In vain they roll their foaming Tide;
Confin'd by the almighty Pow'r,
That gave them Strength to roar,
They now contract their boiſtrous Pride,
And laſh with idle Rage the laughing Strand.

PART II. SCENE I.

Enter HAMOR, IPHIS, *&c.*

RECITATIVE.

Iamor. GLAD Tidings of great Joy to Thee, dear *Iphis*,
And to the Houſe of *Iſraël* I bring.
Thus then in brief. --- Both Armies in Array
)f Battel rang'd, our General ſtept forth
nd offer'd haughty *Ammon* Terms of Peace,
Moſt juſt and righteous; theſe with Scorn refus'd,
Ie bade the Trumpet ſound: but ſcarce a Sword
Vas ting'd in hoſtile Blood, ere all around

The thund'ring Heavens open'd, and pour'd forth
Thouſands of armed *Cherubim*: When ſtrait
Our General cried; " *This is thy Signal, Lord,*
" *I follow Thee, and thy bright heavenly Hoſt.*
Then ruſhing on proud *Ammon*, all aghaſt,
He made a bloody Slaughter, and perſued
The flying Foe, till Night bade ſheathe the Sword,
And taſte the Joys of Victory and Peace.

CHORUS.

" Cherub *and* Seraphim, *unbodied Forms,*
The Meſſengers of Fate,
God's dread Command await;
Of ſwifter Flight, and ſubtler Frame,
Than Lightning's winged Flame,
They ride on Whirlwinds, and direct the Storms.

AIR. Hamor *to* Iphis.

Up the dreadful Steep aſcending,
While for Love and Fame contending,
Sought I thee, my glorious Prize.
And now happy in the Bleſſing,
Thee, my ſweeteſt Joy, poſſeſſing,
Other Honours I deſpiſe.

RECITATIVE.

Iphis. 'Tis well.---
---Haſte, haſte, ye Maidens, and in richeſt Robes,
Adorn me, like a ſtately Bride, to meet

My Father in triumphant Pomp.---
And while around the dancing Banners play,

AIR.

Tune the ſoft melodious Lute,
Pleaſant Harp, and warbling Flute,
To Sounds of rapt'rous Joy.
Such as on our ſolemn Days,
Singing great Jehovah's *Praiſe,*
The holy Choir employ. [Exeunt.

SCENE II.

Enter Jephtha, Zebul, Hamor, *&c.*

RECITATIVE.

Jephtha. Again Heav'n ſmiles on his repentant People;
And Victory ſpreads wide her ſilver Wings,
To ſooth our Sorrows with a peaceful Calm.
Zebul, thy Deeds were valiant, nor leſs thine,
My *Hamor*, but *the Glory is the Lord's.*

AIR.

His mighty Arm, with ſudden Blow,
Diſpers'd and quell'd the haughty Foe.
They fell before him, as when through the Sky,
He bids the ſweeping Winds in Vengeance fly.

CHORUS.

" *In Glory high, in Might ſerene,*
He ſees, moves all, unmov'd, unſeen.

His mighty Arm, with ſudden Blow,
Diſpers'd, and quell'd the haughty Foe.

SCENE III.

[Symphony.]

Enter Iphis, Storgè, *&c.*

Iphis. Hail, glorious Conqueror! much-lov'd Father, hail!
Behold, thy Daughter and her Virgin Train,
Come to ſalute thee with all duteous Love.

AIR.

Welcome, as the chearful Light,
Driving darkeſt Shades of Night:
Welcome, as the Spring, that rains
Sweets, and Plenty o'er the Plains!
Not chearful Day,
Nor Spring ſo gay,
Such mighty Bleſſings brings,
As Peace on her triumphant Wings.

Semichorus of Virgins.

Welcome Thou, whoſe Deeds conſpire
To provoke the warbling Lyre.
Welcome Thou, whom God ordain'd
Guardian Angel of our Land!
Thou wert born, his glorious Name,
And great Wonders to proclaim.

RECITATIVE.

Jephtha. Horror! Confuſion! harſh this Muſic grates

Upon my taſteleſs Ears --- Be gone, my Child,
Thou haſt undone thy Father. --- Fly, be gone,
And leave me to the Rack of wild Deſpair. [*Exit* Iphis.

AIR.

" *Open thy marble Jaws, O Tomb,*
And hide me, Earth, in thy dark Womb:
Ere I the Name of Father ſtain,
And deepeſt Woe from Conqueſt gain.

RECITATIVE.

Zebul. Why is my Brother thus afflicted? ſay,
Why didſt Thou ſpurn thy Daughter's Gratulations,
And fling her from Thee with unkind Diſdain?

Jephtha. O *Zebul*, *Hamor*, and my deareſt Wife,
Behold a wretched Man; ---
Thrown from the Summit of preſumptuous Joy,
Down to the loweſt Depth of Miſery. ---
Know then, --- I vow'd the firſt I ſaw ſhou'd fall
A Victim to the living God. --- my Daughter ---
Alas! it was my Daughter, and ſhe dies.

RECITATIVE *accompany'd.*

Storgè. Firſt periſh Thou; and periſh all the World!
Hath Heav'n then bleſs'd us with this only Pledge
Of all our Love, this one dear Child, for Thee
To be her Murderer? --- No, cruel Man;

AIR.

" *Let other Creatures die;*
Or Heav'n, Earth, Seas, and Sky
In one Confuſion lie.

Ere in a Daughter's Blood
So fair, ſo chaſte, ſo good,
A Father's Hand's embrued.

RECITATIVE.

Hamor. If ſuch thy cruel Purpoſe; lo! thy Friend
Offers himſelf a willing Sacrifice,
To ſave the innocent and beauteous Maid.

AIR.

On me let blind miſtaken Zeal
Her utmoſt Rage employ.
'Twill be a Mercy there to kill,
Where Life can taſte no Joy.

QUARTETTO.

Zebul. *O ſpare thy Daughter.* ----
Storgè. --- *Spare my Child,*
Hamor. --- *my Love*
Jephtha. *Recorded ſtands my Vow in Heav'n above.*
Storgè. *Recal the impious Vow, ere 'tis too late.*
Hamor. } *And think not God delights*
Zebul. } *In* Moloch's *horrid Rites.*
Jephtha. *I'll hear no more; her Doom is fix'd as Fate.*

SCENE IV.

Enter Iphis.

RECITATIVE.

Iphis. Swift flies ſuch News; I've heard the mournful Cauſ
Of all your Sorrows. --- Of my Father's Vow

Heav'n ſpoke its Approbation by Succeſs:
Gilead hath triumph'd. --- *Iſraël* is free.

RECITATIVE *accompany'd.*

For Joys ſo vaſt, too little is the Price
Of one poor Life. --- but oh! accept it, Heav'n,
A grateful Victim, and thy Bleſſings ſtill
Pour on my Country, Friends, and deareſt Father!

AIR.

Happy they; this vital Breath
With Content I ſhall reſign;
And not murmur, or repine,
Sinking in the Arms of Death.

RECITATIVE *accompany'd.*

Jephtha. Deeper and deeper ſtill, thy goodneſs, Child,
Pierceth a Father's bleeding Heart, and checks
The cruel Sentence on my falt'ring Tongue.
Oh! let me whiſper it to the raging Winds,
Or howling Deſerts; for the Ears of Men
It is too ſhocking. --- Yet --- have I not vow'd?
And can I think the great *Jehovah* ſleeps,
Like *Chemoſh*, and ſuch fabled Deities?
No, no; Heav'n heard my Thoughts, and wrote them down. ---
It muſt be ſo. --- 'Tis This that racks my Brain,
And pours into my Breaſt a thouſand Pangs,
That laſh me into Madneſs. --- Horrid Thought!
My only Daughter! --- and ſo dear a Child,
Doom'd by a Father! --- Yes, --- the Vow is paſt,

And *Gilead* hath triumph'd o'er his Foes. ---
Therefore, to-morrow's Dawn --- I can no more.

CHORUS.

How dark, O Lord, are thy Decrees!
All hid from mortal Sight!
All our Joys to Sorrow turning,
And our Triumphs into Mourning,
As the Night ſucceeds the Day.
No certain Bliſs,
No ſolid Peace,
We Mortals know,
On Earth below;
Yet on this Maxim ſtill obey;
Whatever is, is right.

PART III. SCENE I.

JEPHTHA, IPHIS, Prieſts, *&c.*

RECITATIVE *accompany'd.*

JEPHTHA.

HIDE thou thy hated Beams, O Sun, in Clouds,
And Darkneſs, deep as is a Father's Woe:

RECITATIVE.

A Father, offering up his only Child
In vow'd Return for Victory and Peace.

AIR.

Waft her, Angels, through the Skies,
Far above yon azure Plain;
Glorious there, like you, to riſe,
There, like you, for ever reign.

RECITATIVE.

Iphis. Ye ſacred Prieſts, whoſe Hands ne'er yet were ſtain'd
'ith human Blood, why are ye thus afraid
o execute my Father's Will?--- The Call
f Heav'n, (for ſure it is the Call of Heav'n,)
'ith humble Reſignation I obey.

AIR.

Farewel, ye limpid Springs and Floods,
Ye flow'ry Meads, and mazy Woods;
Farewel, thou buſy World, where reign
Short Hours of Joy, and Years of Pain.
Brighter Scenes I ſeek above,
In the Realms of Peace and Love.

Chorus *of* Prieſts.

Doubtful Fear, and reverent Awe
Strike us, Lord, while here we bow:
Check'd by thy all-ſacred Law,
Yet commanded by the Vow.
In this Diſtreſs, Lord, hear our Pray'r,
And thy determin'd Will declare.

[Symphony.]

RECI-

RECITATIVE.

Angel. Riſe, *Jephtha*,--And, ye reverend Prieſts, withhold
The ſlaughtrous Hand. --- No Vow can diſannul
The Law of God. --- Nor ſuch was its Intent
When rightly ſcann'd;--- and yet ſhall be fulfill'd. ---
Thy Daughter, *Jephtha*, thou muſt dedicate
To God, in pure and Virgin-ſtate for ever,
As not an Object meet for Sacrifice,
Elſe had ſhe faln an Holocauſt to God.
The Holy Spirit, that dictated thy Vow,
Bade thus explain it, and approves your Faith.

AIR.

Happy, Iphis, *ſhalt thou live*;
While to thee the Virgin Choir
Tune their Harps of golden Wire,
And their yearly Tribute give.

Happy, Iphis, *all thy Days,*
(Pure, angelic, Virgin-ſtate,)
Shalt thou live; and Ages late
Crown thee with immortal Praiſe.

RECITATIVE, *accompany'd.*

Jephtha. For ever bleſſed be thy holy Name,
Lord God of *Iſrael!* ----

CHORUS.

Theme ſublime of endleſs Praiſe,
Juſt and righteous are thy Ways;

And thy Mercies ſtill endure,
Ever faithful, ever ſure.

SCENE II.

Enter Zebul, Storgè, Hamor, *&c.*

RECITATIVE.

Zebul. Let me congratulate this happy Turn,
My honour'd Brother, Judge of *Iſraël*;
Thy Faith, thy Courage, Conſtancy and Truth,
Nations ſhall ſing; and in their juſt Applauſe,
All join to celebrate thy Daughter's Name.

AIR.

Laud her, all ye Virgin Train,
In glad Songs of choiceſt Strain:
Ye bleſt Angels all around,
Laud her in melodious Sound:
Virtues, that to you belong,
Love, and Truth demand the Song.

RECITATIVE.

Storgè to *Iphis.*] O let me fold thee in a Mother's Arms,
And with ſubmiſſive Joy, my Child, receive
Thy Deſignation to the Life of Heav'n.

AIR.

Sweet as Sight to the Blind,
Or Freedom to the Slave,
Such Joy in thee I find,
Safe from the Grave.

Still I'm of Thee poſſeſs'd,
Such is kind Heav'n's Decree,
That hath thy Parents bleſs'd,
In bleſſing Thee.

RECITATIVE *accompany'd.*

Hamor. With Tranſport, *Iphis*, I behold thy Safety,
But muſt for ever mourn ſo dear a Loſs:
Dear, tho' great *Jephtha* were to honour me
Still with the Name of Son. ---

AIR.

'Tis Heav'n's all-ruling Pow'r
That checks the riſing Sigh;
Yet let me ſtill adore,
And think an Angel by:
While thus each Charm and beauteous Line
With more than human Luſtre ſhine.

RECITATIVE.

Iphis. My faithful *Hamor*, may that Providence
Which gently claims, or forceth our Submiſſion,
Direct thee to ſome happier Choice. ---

AIR.

Freely I to Heav'n reſign
All that is in Hamor *mine.*
Joys triumphant crown thy Days,
And thy Name eternal Praiſe.
Great the Bliſs aſſign'd to me,
Greater ſtill attend on thee.

CHORUS.

Ye House of Gilead, *with one Voice,*
In Bleſſings manifold rejoice,
Freed from War's deſtructive Sword:
Peace her Plenty 'round ſhall ſpread,
While in Virtue's Path ye tread.
So bleſt are they who fear the Lord.

Hallelujah.

FINIS.